

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 1037

SENATE BILL NO. 4104

**By Herron, Henry, Stanley, Kilby, Ford, Lowe Finney, Jackson, Burks,
Raymond Finney**

Substituted for: House Bill No. 4089

**By Maddox, Ford, Williams, Pitts, Brown, Bass, McManus, Todd,
Lynn, Hawk, Crider, Eldridge, Lollar, Vaughn, Hensley, Shaw,
Armstrong, McDonald, Cooper, Bone, Fincher, Towns, McCormick,
Ulysses Jones, Campfield, Strader, Dean, Phillip Johnson, Yokley,
Litz, Fitzhugh, Montgomery, Baird, Sargent, Windle, Lundberg, Harry
Brooks, Miller, Niceley, Bell, DuBois, Ferguson, Winningham, Coley,
Swafford, Curtis Johnson, Hill, Harmon, Fraley, Hood, Gresham**

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, relative to authorizing the state board of education to develop and adopt a curriculum for a state funded elective course consisting of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature, art, music, culture, and politics.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Bible in School Act".

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 10, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

49-6-10__.

(a) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve a curriculum for an elective state funded course consisting of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible. The course may include the impact of the Bible on literature, art, music, culture, and politics. The curriculum and associated textbooks shall meet academic rigor and standards of the State Board of Education in the same manner as required for approval of any other elective course and textbook approved by the state board and shall meet the requirements of the Constitutions of the United States and Tennessee. The course provided for in this section shall:

(1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no attempt made to indoctrinate students;

(2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

(3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a particular set of religious beliefs.

(b) All courses which were taught in the 2007-2008 school year under a special course number in any LEA in the state for an elective course consisting of an academic study of the Bible shall be an approved curriculum by the Department of Education.

(c) Any course for an academic study of the Bible using a curriculum developed by an LEA that has been approved by the Department of Education may be adopted by another LEA without further approval by the department.

(d) An LEA that elects to offer a course and utilize an associated textbook approved in accordance with subsection (a) of this section shall implement such course in accordance with the Constitutions of the United States and Tennessee, including the manner in which the course is taught in the classroom and the assignment by the LEA of the individual teaching the course. The individual assigned to teach the course shall meet all certification requirements and all other provisions of this chapter relating to personnel employed by local units of administration. In addition, no person shall be assigned to teach such course based in whole or in part on any religious test, profession of faith or lack of faith, prior or present religious affiliation or lack of affiliation, or criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of beliefs about the Bible or in violation of Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 80 or Section 49-6-2906.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed as mandating that an LEA use the curriculum developed under subsection (a) for an academic study of the Bible or prohibiting an LEA from adopting its own curriculum for an academic study of the Bible; provided, that any academic study of the Bible so offered shall be approved as a special course according to the rules of the State Board of Education and in compliance with the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: May 14, 2008



RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE



JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 28th day of May 2008



PHIL BREDESEN, GOVERNOR